



Shanghai Consulate News for Americans

Issue 31

August, 2010

New Schedule of Consular Fees Took Effect on July 13, 2010

This newsletter is published by the American Citizen Services (ACS) Unit, U.S. Consulate General in Shanghai. If there are any particular topics you are interested in, please contact ACS at: ShanghaiACS@state.gov.

Inside this issue:

Embassy Beijing's ACS on Facebook	2
Travel Warnings and Alerts	2
Pages, Passports: Don't Wait Until The Last Minute!	3
Shanghai Expat Show, Sept. 17-19	3
Summer Hints for Passport Services	3
Leaving the Consular District?	4
Worldwide Caution: Aug. 2010	5
ACS Addresses, Phones, Fax, Hours and Website	6

On June 28, 2010, the U.S. Department of State published its Schedule of Fees for Consular Services in the Federal Register. The schedule includes fees for passports, immigrant visas and other consular services. The changes took effect on July 13, 2010, 15 days after publication in the Federal Register. The revised fees cover actual operating expenses for the 301 overseas consular posts, 23 domestic passport agencies and other centers that provide these consular services to U.S. and foreign citizens.

The 27 adjusted fees are based on a Cost of Service Study completed by the Bureau of Consular Affairs in June 2009. The study, which was the most detailed and exhaustive ever conducted by the U.S. Department of State, established the true cost of providing these consular services, which the Department recovers through the collection of fees.

A full list of adjusted fees can be viewed at http://www.travel.state.gov/news/news_5078.html.

Upcoming Holidays and Other Closures

The American Citizen Services Unit will be **CLOSED** on the following days:

- September 6, Mon: U.S. Labor Day
- September 22, Wed: Mid-Autumn Festival
- October 1-5, Fri-Tues: Chinese National Day Holidays

Special points of interest:

- * Voting Made Easier: Electronic Delivery Options For Absentee Ballots & Upcoming State Primaries
- * Ask the Consul: Can I Request for a Thicker Passport?

A full list of all of our holiday closings is available online at <http://shanghai.usembassy-china.org.cn/holidays.html>.

Please understand that our office is often very busy on the day before and the day after a holiday closure so you should expect longer wait times if you come on such days. If you visit us outside of these time periods, you should experience a shorter wait than pre-/post- holiday closure days.

Embassy Beijing's ACS unit launches Facebook page

On July 20, 2010, Embassy Beijing's American Citizen Services (ACS) unit launched its first Facebook page. On this page, Americans traveling or residing in China can find information about the services ACS Beijing offers, hours of operation, location, and miscellaneous updates. If you have a Facebook account and would like to

receive regular updates, we invite you to visit this page.

This Facebook page is intended as a supplement to, NOT a replacement for, the Beijing ACS webpage (<http://beijing.usembassy-china.org.cn/service.html>) and warden message system.

How to Join: From your Facebook page, search for "U.S. Embassy Beijing American Citizen Services" and click the "like" button at the top right of the page. This will allow you to access the page and receive updates.

Let us know if you think it would be helpful for the ACS unit here in Shanghai to create a Facebook page.

Security Situation - Travel Warnings and Alerts

Security reminder: It is prudent for you and your family to review your personal security profile and to be aware of your surroundings at all times.

Since our previous Newsletter, the U.S. Department of State has issued new Travel Warnings for the following countries:

<u>Afghanistan</u>	08/13/2010
<u>Russian Federation</u>	08/10/2010
<u>Israel, the West Bank and Gaza</u>	08/10/2010
<u>Mali</u>	08/06/2010
<u>Mauritania</u>	08/02/2010

Travel Warnings are issued to de-



scribe long-term, protracted conditions that make a country dangerous or unstable. A Travel Warning is also issued when the U.S. Government's ability to assist American citizens is constrained due to the closure of an embassy or consulate or because of a drawdown of its staff. This information is available at http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis_pa_tw/tw_1764.html.

The U.S. Department of State also has issued new Travel Alerts:

<u>Bolivia</u>	08/12/2010
<u>China</u>	07/30/2010

Travel Alerts are issued to disseminate information about short-term conditions generally within a particular country or region that pose imminent risks to the security of U.S. citizens. Natural disasters, terrorist attacks, coups, anniversaries of terrorist events, election-related demonstrations or violence, and high-profile events such as international conferences or regional sports events are examples of conditions that might generate a Travel Alert. This informa-

tion is available at http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis_pa_tw/pa/pa_1766.html.

The most up-to-date information regarding permitted and prohibited items on flights can be viewed online at <http://www.tsa.gov/travelers/airtravel/prohibited/permitted-prohibited-items.shtm>.

For additional information, please visit "Americans Traveling Abroad" on the U.S. Department of State website: http://travel.state.gov/visa/americans/americans_1252.html. Students traveling abroad may wish to visit the State Department site designed for them: <http://studentsabroad.state.gov/>.

To obtain up-to-date information on security conditions, please call 1-888-407-4747 (toll free in the United States), or +1-202-501-4444 if you are outside the United States.

You may also visit the Consular Affairs twitter page at <http://twitter.com/TravelGov>.

Pages, Passports: Don't Wait Until The Last Minute!

Don't wait until the last minute to add more pages to your passport or to apply for a new one.

The U.S. Consulate only adds pages to a passport two times. We will not add pages to a passport that already has two sets of added pages, or is in poor condition. It is our shared responsibility to protect the integrity of the passport and adding too many pages to a passport compromises its integrity. If you wait till there are no empty spaces

in your passport for visas or entry/exit stamps, you may be caught in a bind.

Pages can be added to a passport while you wait. If we reject your application for more pages, you will have to apply for a new passport. New passports are produced in the U.S. and normally arrive 10 business days after you submit your application. You may keep your old passport and still use it to travel while you wait for the new one. Note that if your old passport is completely full or

has less than 6-months validity, you may not be allowed to use it to exit China or to enter a third country.

To make an appointment to add more pages or to apply for a new passport, please visit: http://shanghai.usembassy-china.org.cn/appointment_system011309.html. The fee for adding pages is \$82, while the fee for applying for an adult passport renewal is \$110.

Shanghai Expat Show, Sept. 17-19, 2010

The Expat Show will take place on Sept 17, 18, 19, at the Shanghai Exhibition Center (上海展览中心 - 1000 Yan'an Zhong Lu, near Tongren Lu in Jing'An, across from the Shanghai Centre (a.k.a. Portman) on Nanjing Xi Lu. This is the 4th edition of the Ex-

pat Show, which touts itself as the biggest gathering of the foreign community in Shanghai. The goal of the exhibition is to help Shanghai-based foreigners to find information, products, and services they might need (or want) for their life here. The organizers anticipate 200 exhibitors from

such diverse markets as travel, clothing, jewelry, art, food and beverage, etc.



Summer Hints for Easier Passport Services

- **Check your passport's expiration date.** Some countries in the region including China, the Philippines, and **Indonesia require that a passport's expiration date be at least six months in the future for visa issuance or visa-free entry (i.e., you will not be admitted if the passport has less than six months validity left).** For further details about visa and entry and exit requirements of countries in the region please go to the travel.state.gov website or check with the airline or your travel agent.

- **Review your children's passports.** Check the expiration date of their

passport – remember that passports for children under 16 are only valid for 5 years.

- **Make an appointment early for passport services.** All non-emergency consular services require an appointment. You can make an appointment online through our website: http://shanghai.usembassy-china.org.cn/appointment_system011309.html. It typically takes 10 working days from the time you apply to receive a new 5-year or 10-year passport. There is a high level of demand for appointment slots in the days and weeks before a holiday and during the summer school

holiday.

- **Avoid a long wait.** Avoid scheduling your appointment on Mondays or the days immediately before or after a holiday when wait times are longest.

- **Check the website.** You can find answers to common questions, as well as useful forms and instructions, **on the Consulate's website at** <http://shanghai.usembassy-china.org.cn/service.html> or <http://shanghai.usconsulate.gov/service.html>.

Voting Made Easier: Electronic Delivery Options For Absentee Ballots & Upcoming State Primaries

This coming November, U.S. voters will elect 39 U.S. Senators and the entire House of Representatives. For overseas voters, the absentee voting process will be much easier, thanks in large part to a new law - the Military and Overseas Voter Empowerment (MOVE) Act - that the U.S. Congress enacted last year.

To vote absentee, U.S. citizens living overseas must be registered to vote, and must request an absentee ballot. You can accomplish both tasks by completing a Federally-issued combination voter registration application and absentee ballot request form known as the Federal Post Card Application, or FPCA. This form, along with State-by-State instructions, is available on the Federal Voting Assistance Program website at www.fvap.gov, or from the U.S. Embassy and Consulates in China.

The new law gives U.S. citizens overseas the ability to request and receive absentee ballots electronically. Just send in a new FPCA with your email and/or complete fax number clearly written out. U.S. citizens who have changed their names, addresses, or email addresses, or who are infrequent voters, should also submit a new FPCA.

Be sure to follow your State's instructions carefully when completing the form and sending it to local election officials in the United States. Both the FVAP website and the Overseas Vote Foundation website, <https://www.overseasvotefoundation.org/> have wizards that assist you in completing and addressing the FPCA.

If you do not receive your absentee ballot after sending in your FPCA within a reasonable time period, notify your local election officials by phone or email. You can also use the Federal Write-in Absentee Ballot (FWAB) as a back-up emergency ballot. Check the www.FVAP.gov website.

The following States will hold Primary Elections during August and September, on the dates indicated:

August 28, 2010: Louisiana (1st Party Congressional), West Virginia (special election)

September 4, 2010: Guam

September 11, 2010: Virgin Islands

September 14, 2010: Delaware, District of Columbia, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New York, Rhode Island, Wisconsin

September 18, 2010: Hawaii



Register and request your absentee ballot now.

Anyone who has not yet submitted a registration and ballot request (FPCA) for the 2010 calendar year should do so as soon as possible. The FPCA ballot application and instructions are available at www.fvap.gov/FPCA. Click on your State on the map and follow the instructions to register and request an absentee ballot. Some States allow submission of the FPCA by fax or email in addition to regular mail.

For more information, please click on the news release for your state at: <http://www.fvap.gov/global/news/index.html>.

Leaving Shanghai Consular District?

If you are departing the Shanghai consular district after a long stay here and you formally registered your stay with the U.S. Consulate, please do not forget to cancel your registration when you leave.

You can unregister yourself by visiting the <https://travelregistration.state.gov> site if you previously registered through this site.

If you previously submitted a paper registration form to the U.S. consulate, you may unregister yourself by sending an email request to: ShanghaiACS@state.gov.

Worldwide Caution, August 2010

August 12, 2010

The Department of State has issued this Worldwide Caution to update information on the continuing threat of terrorist actions and violence against U.S. citizens and interests throughout the world. U.S. citizens are reminded to maintain a high level of vigilance and to take appropriate steps to increase their security awareness. This replaces the Worldwide Caution dated February 12, 2010, to provide updated information on security threats and terrorist activities worldwide.

The Department of State remains concerned about the continued threat of terrorist attacks, demonstrations, and other violent actions against U.S. citizens and interests overseas. U.S. citizens are reminded that demonstrations and rioting can occur with little or no warning. Current information suggests that al-Qaida and affiliated organizations continue to plan terrorist attacks against U.S. interests in multiple regions, including Europe, Asia, Africa, and the Middle East. These attacks may employ a wide variety of tactics including suicide operations, assassinations, kidnappings, hijackings, and bombings.

Extremists may elect to use conventional or non-conventional weapons, and target both official and private interests. Examples of such targets include high-profile sporting events, residential areas, business offices, hotels, clubs, restaurants, places of worship, schools, public areas, and locales where U.S. citizens gather in large numbers, including during holidays.

U.S. citizens are reminded of the potential for terrorists to attack public transportation systems and other tourist infrastructure. Extremists have targeted and attacked subway and rail systems, as well as aviation and maritime services.

In the past several years, attacks have occurred in cities such as London, Madrid, Glasgow, and Moscow. Credible information indicates terrorist groups seek to continue attacks against U.S. interests in the Middle East and North Africa. For example, Iraq remains dangerous and unpredictable. Attacks against military and civilian targets throughout Iraq continue. Methods of attack have included roadside improvised explosive devices, mortars, and shootings; kidnappings still occur as well. Security threat levels remain high in Yemen due to terrorist activities there. The U.S. Embassy has had to close several times in response to ongoing threats by Al-Qaida in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP). U.S. citizens have been the targets of numerous terrorist attacks in Lebanon in the past and the threat of anti-Western terrorist activity continues to exist there. In Algeria, terrorist attacks occur regularly, particularly in the Kabylie region of the country.

In the past, terrorists have targeted oil processing facilities in both Saudi Arabia and Yemen. A number of al-Qaida opera-

tives and other extremists are believed to be operating in and around Africa. Since the July 11, 2010, terrorist bombings in Kampala, Uganda, for which the Somalia-based, U.S.-designated Foreign Terrorist Organization al-Shabaab has claimed responsibility, there have been increased threats against public areas across East Africa. The terrorist bombing in two public venues in Kampala, which resulted in 74 deaths, highlights the vulnerabilities of large public gatherings in East Africa and around the world. Additionally, the terrorist group, al-Qaida in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) has declared its intention to attack Western targets throughout the Sahel, which includes Mali, Mauritania, and Niger, and has claimed responsibility for kidnappings, attempted kidnappings, and the murder of several Westerners.

U.S. citizens considering travel by sea near the Horn of Africa or in the southern Red Sea should exercise extreme caution, as there has been a notable increase in armed attacks, robberies and kidnappings for ransom at sea by pirates. Merchant vessels continue to be hijacked in Somali territorial waters, while others have been hijacked as far as 1,000 nautical miles off the coast of Somalia, Yemen, and Kenya in international waters.

The U.S. government maritime authorities advise mariners to avoid the port of Mogadishu, and to remain at least 200 nautical miles off the coast of Somalia. In addition, when transiting around the Horn of Africa or in the Red Sea, it is strongly recommended that vessels travel in convoys, and maintain good communications at all times. U.S. citizens traveling on commercial passenger vessels should consult with the shipping or cruise ship company regarding precautions that will be taken to avoid hijacking incidents. Commercial vessels should review the Department of Transportation Maritime Administration's suggested piracy countermeasures for vessels transiting the Gulf of Aden.

The U.S. government continues to receive information that terrorist groups in South and Central Asia may be planning attacks in the region, possibly against U.S. government facilities, U.S. citizens, or U.S. interests. The presence of al-Qaida, Taliban elements, Lashkar-e-Taiba, indigenous sectarian groups, and other terror organizations, many of which are on the U.S. government's list of foreign terror organizations, poses a potential danger to U.S. citizens in the region. Terrorists and their sympathizers have demonstrated their willingness and capability to attack targets where Americans or Westerners are known to congregate or visit. Their actions may include, but are not limited to, vehicle-borne explosives, improvised explosive devices, assassinations, carjacking, rocket attacks, assaults, or kidnappings.

Some examples include Pakistan where a number of extremist

(Continued on Page 6)

Shanghai Consulate News for Americans

U.S. Consulate General,
Shanghai, China

1038 West Nanjing Road, 8/F
Westgate Mall 梅龙镇广场

(Méi lóng zhèn guǎngchǎng)

Tel: (86-21) 3217-4650

Fax: (86-21) 6217-2071

After Hours Emergencies:

(86-21) 6433-3936

Open 8:00am - 11:30am

and 1:30pm - 3:30pm

Monday to Friday *Closed on
Tuesday afternoons, weekends,
and holidays.

<http://shanghai.usconsulate.gov>

Someone Asked the Consul:

Can I request for a thicker passport?

Yes. If you choose to renew your passport, you have the option of receiving a 52-page passport book for the same price (\$110 for adults, and \$105 for children) as the normally issued 28-page passport book. When applying to renew your passport, please indicate that you would like to be issued a 52-page passport book. Instructions on renewing a U.S. passport are available at http://shanghai.usembassy-china.org.cn/u.s.passport_renewals.html.

Also, if your passport's visa pages are becoming full, but your passport is still valid and in good condition, you may apply to add a set of 24 additional pages to your current valid passport at a cost of \$82 per set of pages, up to two times maximum.

Worldwide Caution, August 2010

(From page 5)

groups continue to target U.S. citizens and other Western interests and Pakistani officials. Suicide bombing attacks continue to occur throughout the country on a regular basis, often targeting government authorities such as police checkpoints and military installations, as well as public areas such as mosques, and shopping areas. In Afghanistan, remnants of the former Taliban regime and the al-Qaida terrorist network, as well as other groups hostile to International Security Assistance Force (ISAF)/NATO military operations, remain active.

There is an ongoing threat to kidnap and assassinate U.S. citizens and Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) workers throughout the country. In India there is a continuing threat of terrorism as attacks have randomly targeted public places frequented by Westerners, including luxury and other hotels, trains, train stations, markets, cinemas, mosques, and restaurants in large urban areas. Supporters of terrorist groups such as the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan, al-

Qaida, the Islamic Jihad Union, and the Eastern Turkistan Islamic Movement are active in the Central Asian region. Members of these groups have expressed anti-U.S. sentiments and have attacked U.S. government interests in the past. Previous terrorist attacks conducted in Central Asia have involved improvised explosive devices, suicide bombings, assassinations, and kidnappings.

Before You Go

U.S. citizens living or traveling abroad are encouraged to register with the nearest U.S. Embassy or Consulate through the State Department's travel registration website so that they can obtain updated information on travel and security. U.S. citizens without Internet access may register directly with the nearest U.S. Embassy or Consulate. By registering, U.S. citizens make it easier for the Embassy or Consulate to contact them in case of emergency.

U.S. citizens are strongly encouraged to maintain a high level of vigilance, be aware of local events, and take the appropriate steps to bolster their personal security. For

additional information, please refer to "A Safe Trip Abroad".

U.S. government facilities worldwide remain at a heightened state of alert. These facilities may temporarily close or periodically suspend public services to assess their security posture. In those instances, U.S. embassies and consulates will make every effort to provide emergency services to U.S. citizens. U.S. citizens abroad are urged to monitor the local news and maintain contact with the nearest U.S. Embassy or Consulate.

As the State Department continues to develop information on any potential security threats to U.S. citizens overseas, it shares credible threat information through its Consular Information Program documents, such as Travel Warnings, Travel Alerts as well as Country Information. You may also obtain up-to-date information on security conditions by calling 1-888-407-4747 toll-free in the U.S. and Canada or, outside the U.S. and Canada on a regular toll line at 1-202-501-4444. These numbers are available from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. M-F, Eastern Time (except U.S. federal holidays).